AN

ESSAY

IN

Morality.

[Bright, George]

† Written by *G. B.* to his Friend *H. P.* Esquire.

In which the Nature of Virtue and Vice is distinctly stated,

Their respective Reasonableness and Unreasonableness demonstrated,

And several useful Conclusions inferred.

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H. Plūptre.

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To his Honoured Friend H. P. *Esquire.*

Dear Sir,

I Perceive your very inquisitive and searching Genius hath not permitted you to rest satisfied with what hath been commonly taught and received in many Questions which you think of the greatest concernment to be truly and clearly resolved: at least of much more than

moſt of thoſe which ordinarily now adays employ the buſie thoughts and pens of Men. And as they have given you ſome trouble and care, ſo I underſtand by you, that they are likely to give me ſome too. For you are pleaſed to believe, that I may have been not altogether a ſtranger to thoughts about ſuch matters; and that peradventure I may have fallen upon ſomething either as to Matter or Method, or both, which might a little contribute to your light and eaſe: though I ſcarce-

ſcarcely know any man who ſtands in leſs need of it than your ſelf. Perhaps our free and frequent mutual Entertainments with Diſcourſes of ſuch nature (the moſt delightful and profitable uſe of friendſhip) have given occaſion to your kind opinion, and put you upon making further tryal.

Sir! I muſt own it to be my Perſwaſion alſo, that the Queſtions you propoſed are all of them of importance, and ſome of them of abſolutely the greateſt; and that they ought to be de-

termined with more clearneſs, certainty, and (which is hugely conſiderable to ſhort-liv'd Mortals) with more brevity than hitherto for all't I know they have been. But I cannot own myſelf to be the perſon in Parts, Health, or Leiſure, ſo happy, as to promiſe you the performance of any great matter at preſent, whereby I might be ſerviceable to you, and anſwer either your deſire or expectation. Nevertheleſs, upon your Requeſt and Command, which go a great

great way with me, backed I acknowledge with ſome ſuſpicion and preſumption that ſomething might be done, I have attempted one of them, which I have been the moſt impatient to be ſatisfied in my ſelf, as appearing to me of the vaſteſt conſequence, and yet delivered, as I thought (ſuch was my unquiet curioſity if you pleaſe) with but too much miſtake, confuſion, and defect in the beſt Writers, and of greateſt name: and therefore long and often before I received your

command, it had been in my thoughts. The queſtion is, what ſhould be the perfection of our Active power or Will, of its Actions or Volitions, of its actual and habitual Inclinations, or in one word, of our *Manners*; and not only of ours, but of any intelligent being exiſtent, and therefore even of the Divine Nature it ſelf; I mean of its *Volitions* and *Decrees*, not of any *inclinations*, which including ſome imperfection, belong not thereunto. Many in my judgment have been the miſtakes

miſtakes and errors in Divinity and Natural Philoſophy, but eſpecially in Morality and Politicks, for want of a right underſtanding in this Queſtion; ſome of which I am ſure, upon peruſal of this, will not eſcape your Obſervation.

I have delivered what I had to ſay, in almoſt Mathematical Method, beginning at the moſt ſimple Notions, which are the moſt plain and undoubted, and then proceeding to what is more compounded; ſo that that which follows, generally de-

pends upon and ſuppoſeth the knowledge of what is before. I have alſo endeavoured that my ſtyle be ſimple, ſhort and clear, without any ornament or finery of words, which may darken the Senſe, or divert the Attention; though it be not ſo common, and ſometimes perhaps uncouth, for a reaſon which you'l meet withal at the end of the Eſſay. But I did not think it this time expedient to go any further, than to point out the way of compoſing a Syſtem of *Ethicks* from theſe Principles; which

which I know at your leiſure you can eaſily do your ſelf. As for what is done, I muſt requeſt the favour of you to read over the whole, which is but ſhort, before you paſs judgement of any part, for the prevention of needleſs diſſatisfaction and ſcruple.

After all, I muſt crave leave to remember ourſelves of that which we have often agreed in; namely, how little the cleareſt and moſt certain knowledge of theſe things will ſignifie, without the practice; and that a generous

nerouſly honeſt man, whoſe Soul is animated and imbued with Virtue, acting according to theſe principles from a publick and univerſalized ſpirit, though they lye not ſo neatly and orderly in his head, is infinitely to be preferred before a meer ſubtle, though moſt ſucceſsful Speculator, which talks as high as Heaven, whoſe Law is ſuch love, as is hereafter deſcribed, but lives as low as earth, where according to the *Jewiſh Adage* כל אהבה תלויה *All friendſhip is governed by ſelf-intereſt,*

reſt, or rather, nothing is beloved but Self, and what miniſters to its pleaſure or advantage.

Though it is not to be denied neither, that naked diſcourſe and true reaſoning is of very great uſe here too. For there are ſome men who believe all the various inclinations, affections, and tempers of Mankind, to be the effect only of divers bodily tempers and examples, not at all of Reaſon and Underſtanding; and that thoſe to Vice (ſo called) as they are more general,

ral, ſo they are more neceſſary, natural, and reaſonable too, than that to what we term Virtue; which, ſay they, is againſt Nature, and ſo far from being reaſonable, that it is impoſſible. Now theſe men are to be convinced, if they be capable of it, or at leaſt ſilenced and confuted.

Others again there are, and that of the beſt ſort of Men, who are great lovers of truth where they can diſcern it; who are ſtrangely affected and tranſported with diſtinct and clear underſtanding

derſtanding; who deſire to ſee why they ſhould be more carried to one thing than another; who do not care to be born away blindly with great and ſwelling paſſions, without the guidance of calm Reaſon, ſeem they never ſo natural, and even Divinely inſpired or impreſſed; who finally are very uneaſie, ſlow, and diſſatisfied, while they act ignorantly and blindly. In ſuch perſons, their approbation of and conſent to Virtue will be more ſincere and hearty, their bent and

tendency

tendency to it more uniform, firm and conſtant, their love more deeply rooted and embowelled, when they ſhall ſee its nature and practice demonſtrated and deduced from the moſt plain and evident truths.

Nor are we finally to think that the principle or end of all our actions, the *Univerſal Good* ſo much inſiſted on in the following Eſſay, is ſuch a high-flown wide notion, and ſo much out of the view of the generality of men, as to be of no

no uſe or application in humane life amongſt them. For contrariwiſe, every one may, and we ſee that plain honeſt men of all ranks and ſorts do propound and purſue it in their little ſphere of action and comprehenſion, as God himſelf doth in the immenſe revolution of his providence. He that knows no more than a Neighbors Cottage or two, may have the ſame general end, namely, the greateſt good he underſtands, with him who is able to comprehend the intereſt of a whole Na-

Nation, or of the whole World if it were poſſible. The pooreſt Vicar may underſtand as well as the pretended Paſtor of the Univerſal Church, and perhaps better practice accordingly, that the only end of his Function and all his Actions, is not his own perſonal intereſt only, but the honour of God, the Salvation of Souls, or the good of his Church, (and how eaſie is it to extend his Notion to the whole world?)the faithful diſcharge of his duty and his reward altogether:

and

and ſo the meaneſt Mechanique or dulleſt Plowman may be eaſily taught to deſire by all his life, and particularly in his honeſt Calling, to pleaſe and ſerve God, to ſupport himſelf and Family, to ſupply and benefit his Neighbours, in hopes of Gods general bleſſing upon himſelf here, both in Soul and Body, and of his reward hereafter. Set but a man entirely free from himſelf, and he will have no other bounds than the moſt comprehenſive good he can reach. Nor indeed is there

any

any thing which lies nearer the Mind of Man, and which he hath a more natural inclination to believe, than that a publick good is to be preferred before a perſonal, ſuppoſing them both equal in reſpect of intenſion or degree; and why not then the moſt publick of all, *viz.* the good of the whole Univerſe, as it were one Corporation or Society? But I am going to prevent my ſelf, and forget the bounds and deſign of a Prefatory Epiſtle.

For the reſt of your Queſti-

Queſtions (you were pleaſed to make out a ſcore, and I doubt you may have more in your Budget) I muſt intreat you to ſtay your ſtomach a while with this Morſel, and to reſpite an anſwer to them. If what I now ſend you be acceptable to ſuch a diligent, I had almoſt ſaid troubleſome enquirer, whom as I have obſerved nothing leſs will ſatisfie, than the utmoſt a man can know and ſay, you may hereafter command the like Eſſay upon ſome one or more of them; which I know your friend-

friendſhip and goodneſs will permit me to obey, when I find my ſelf beſt able to ſerve you.

1. FIrſt then be pleaſed to obſerve, That all that is in the Soul of Man, may be reduced, according to *Des-Cartes*, to two general things. (1.) Paſſion. (2.) Action. The firſt contains all ſorts of Perceptions, *viz.* Senſe, Memory, Imagination, Intellection, Paſſions, or Affections; although there ſeems to be ſomewhat of Action too in

in the Souls Perceptions.

2. And as for Action, there hath ſeem'd to be of it in the Soul, theſe four kinds. (1.) Dubitation. (2.) Suſpenſion. (3.) Aſſent. (4.) Volition. But I rather now think only two. (1.) Aſſent. (2.) Volition. For as for Dubitation, it ſeems to be nothing but Suſpenſion; and Suſpenſion ſeems only an act of Volition not to aſſent; and Nolition is but Volition of the abſence of a thing.

3. To ſay nothing at this time of Aſſent; in Volition

lition may be conſidered four things. (1.) The faculty of Volition, uſually called Appetite; which is but one in Man, diſtinguiſhed by its ſeveral Objects; as when it hath for its Object ſenſible and corporeal good, or certain agreeable motions of the Body which cauſe the perception of pleaſure in the Soul, it is called the Senſitive Appetite: But when it hath for its Object that which can be apprehended only by the rational faculty of the Soul, or that faculty whereby

by the Soul perceives Spiritual Objects (which are but of two ſorts; either abſolute, as Spiritual Subſtances and their Attributes, ſuch as Perception and Volition, Knowledge, & Power, and Goodneſs; or Relative, as the σχέσεις *habitudes*, and relations of things, ſuch as Means & End, Likeneſs and Difference, and conſequently Equality and Inequality) I ſay, then it may be called the Rational Appetite. Though indeed that only hath been uſed to be ſo termed, which hath for its object, *Bonum*

honeſtum, the *honeſty*, *probity*, *rectitude* of a mans actions, the τὸ δέον τὸ πρεσῆκον, that which ought to be done, or is according to true reaſon.

The ſecond thing to be obſerved in Volition, is the *Action*; the third, An actual Inclination or Propenſion in the Soul; and the fourth, An Habitual Inclination. Of the firſt and ſecond none doubts; and for the third, experience teacheth, that there is often this which I call an *Actual Inclination* of the Soul to a certain object; others a *Propenſion*, *Velleity* han-

hankering, before there be any expreſs Volition; that which is uſually ſignified by ſuch phraſes; *I could find in my heart to do ſuch a thing*; and that of *Fœlix* to St. *Paul*, *Thou haſt almoſt perſwaded me to be a Chriſtian.* And for the fourth, this one thing evinces it, *viz.* That there is a great difference between men in the facility, readineſs, and ſtrength to their actual inclinations, and Volitions, before they actually exiſt. Of this facility in one man, which is not in another, there muſt

be ſome *preſent* cauſe in one man which is not in another; and this I call an *Habitual Inclination* or *Volition*. It is moſt certain, there is ſomething in two men accuſtomed to two things with delight, when they have no actual Inclination and Volition in them; which upon the propoſal of thoſe two different objects, doth produce two different or contrary actual Inclinations and Volitions, and this not only in the Mechaniſms of their Bodies, by which thoſe objects excite

cite corporeal paſſions of love or delight; but in the Soul too, and moſt often contracted by the frequent actual inclinations impreſſed upon the Soul by theſe paſſions, and ſometimes without them. But it is enough, that it is agreed by all men, that there is an actual difference *inherent* and *preſent* in the Soul, between a Drunkard and an Ambitious man, even when they are aſleep, or their Volition and actual inclination are employed about other things; which then appears,

when the proper objects of their respective appetites and habitual inclinations are proposed to them.

As for all other humane Actions, which have been called *imperate*, or Actions commanded by, and consequent upon Volition, except Volition itself, (for one Volition may have for its object another Volition) such as are Attention, Consideration, Judgment, motion of the parts of the Body, or Bodily Action, in which is Speech or Words; I meddle not at present with

with them, only ſuggeſt, that there is nothing of Moral good or evil, of *inherent* Virtue or Vice in them: they are indeed moſtwhat (though they may be diſſembled) ſigns thereof, and of its degrees; nor are they ſo much as what in the Twenty ninth Article or Paragraph we term *inſtrumental* or *eventual* Virtues or Vices, any further than they include *Volition.* For example, there is neither Virtue nor Vice in attention or judgment, which are actions of the Mind; nor

in Speech, Geſture, Motion, which are actions of the body; but only in the *Volition* or act of the Will, which commands or effects them.

4. Now of theſe three laſt, *viz.* Actual Volition, Actual and Habitual Inclination, the perfection and defect may be conſidered: which perfection and defect (of Volition for example, and ſo of the reſt) can be only in two reſpects, *viz.* (1.) Of the Object. (2.) Of the Action.

5. And firſt, concerning the Object of Volition, it

is to be noted, that at the ſame time it can be but one, though that one may conſiſt of ſeveral parts which may be ſucceſſively regarded. For example, a man cannot will and regard at the ſame preciſe time his Neighbours good and his own Reputation, as two diſtinct ſeparate co-ordinate things; but he may will them both together, as making up, or compoſing one entire Object; like as the Eye can ſee but one Object at the ſame time painted at the bottom there-

of, conſiſting of many parts; the whole it may ſee together confuſedly, and but one point diſtinctly.

6. Moreover, that the only Object of Volition, and ſo of the reſt, is *bonity* or *good* only, not *evil*, is manifeſt from univerſal expe-rience. All which goodneſs, or what is *convenient*, *congruous*, *eligible*, *deſirable*, (for by all theſe may bonity or good be deſcribed) is of two kinds. (1.) That of the End, (2.) That of the Means. That of the End hath been uſually called *bonum*

jucundum, delectable or pleaſant good or pleaſure, delight: although this very *pleaſure* hath ſome further uſe,& is likewiſe a means to excite, encourage, and fortifie the Operations of the Mind,which again mediately and immediately may produce new pleaſure. That of the means is called *bonum utile*, or profitable good to obtain the end of delectable good, of which the kinds are numerous.

7. The goodneſs of the means is nothing but its Conducibility to, or Cauſality

ſality of the end; which indeed is the goodneſs of the end in the means; it is the ſame: there is nothing eligible in the means to obtain any end, but the goodneſs of the end it ſelf. Of this *profitable good*, *bonum honeſtum*, or honeſt good, is one ſort or kind, as we ſhall preſently underſtand.

8. And to add this for the preſent, the τὸ καλὸν, or pulchritude and beauty of Virtue, in whatſoever it conſiſts, talked of ſo much by Platoniſts, is another ſort; and is only therefore good, be-

becauſe it is ſo congruous or delectable an object to the Mind, or ſome way or other hath in it ſome cauſality of pleaſure or delight.

9. As for *delectable good*, which is, as hath been ſaid, the only object of Volition, it is better underſtood by every mans experience, than by all the deſcriptions that can be given of it: ſuch as *Ariſtotle*'s perfection of the Minds Operation; and *Eudoxus*'s perfect and grateful aſſenſion and acquieſcence; *Plato*'s paſſion, affection, and diffuſion

ſion of the mind, and the repoſe of the Will in ſome convenient good; and many others, ſome of which are contrary each to other: as when ſome ſay it is Motion, and ſome ſay it is the Reſt and Repoſe of the Mind. It is more to our purpoſe to obſerve, that it hath indefinite degrees, and that in three reſpects only and no more; *viz.* (1.) In Extenſion as to Subjects. (2.) Intenſion. (3.) Duration. Of which (to take the extremes only) the loweſt degree in the firſt reſpect is the

the good of one ſingle Soul; the higheſt, that of all Spiritual Beings exiſtant, uſually comprehended under God, our Neighbour, and our ſelves: where by Neighbour, we underſtand all Rational Creatures at leaſt. We actually indeed know a moſt inconſiderable part of Mankind, only our own Family, Town, or Countrey; to whoſe greateſt good notwithſtanding if we direct our Volition, it is a ſign we implicitely will that good which is abſolutely the greateſt; and that if any

any greater good were within our view and comprehenſion, we ſhould will that expreſly and actually. In the ſecond reſpect, we want both conceits and words for the loweſt and higheſt degree. In the third reſpect, the loweſt degree is that good which is momentany, the higheſt Eternal.

10. Wherefore the greateſt delectable good abſolutely, is that which is ſo in extenſion, intenſion, duration; or the *Eternal happineſs of the whole Univerſe* conſidered as one thing, and

as

as *Cartes* conſidered Motion in the Material world.

11. After which it is eaſie to obſerve, that the greateſt and firſt perfection of Volition in reſpect of the Object, is to be directed to this abſolutely greateſt good, or to have it for its Object: and contrariwiſe, the greateſt defect thereof is to be directed to the leaſt part thereof, in reſpect again of Extenſion, Intenſion, & Duration; for example, to the ſmalleſt momentany pleaſure of any one ſingle being, which is uſually, if not

not always, ones ſelf.

12. Nor is it leſs manifeſt, that this is a *perfection*, as it is the common ſenſe of all men: for otherwiſe, to illuſtrate rather than to prove it, God would have been equally perfect if he had not, as if he had determined to make the Univerſe, and that in ſuch a degree happy as it is: nay, if his nature had been ſuch as to have been the moſt delighted with the eternal miſery of all his Creatures, it would have been equally his perfection to have effect-

ed

ed it for his own pleaſure, as to have made it happy. Again, the Devil, or the moſt malicious, proud, revengeful, finally the moſt wicked of all Natures, is therefore the moſt imperfect, becauſe he is the moſt pleaſed with others evil.

13. It hath indeed been taught by ſome of thoſe who have deduced all our Offices and duties from ſelf-love and intereſt, that this perfection is not competible to any being whatſoever; at leaſt not to men: that every nature is neceſſarily carried

carried to its own proper good only; that it cannot be in the leaſt moved with the good of another. But I contrariwiſe affirm in the firſt place, that this perfection is a thing poſſible to a reaſonable Nature. Next, that there is in all men, among other innate appetites, this alſo of Univerſal Beneficence. And finally, that there is a Capacity in our Souls of being more pleaſed and delighted therewith, than any ſingle Object in the world, and conſequently it is improveable

to

to a higher degree of ſtrength and force (which may be called generoſity) than any other appetite whatſoever. All which, becauſe it is of greateſt conſequence, is thus proved. (1.) That it is a thing poſſible; if it be not, it is either becauſe we cannot will anothers good, or we cannot apprehend it. Not the firſt of theſe: for the Object of Volition is preciſely *good* or *bonum*, not *propriety*; ſo that if we ſeparate them two, we ſhall find *propriety* to have nothing

thing of Eligibility in it; if there were, then there would be ſomething of Eligibility too in our proper and perſonal evil as well as good. Nor is the ſecond true, that we cannot apprehend anothers good. For it is moſt plain, that we can in our conception conjoyn pain or pleaſure, good or evil, with any other Soul or Mind, as well as our own; or we can ſuppoſe the ſame evil we ſuffer in another perſon. Who is there who hath himſelf felt the torment of the Stone, that doth not

not well underſtand the ſame in another, and pity him too when he hears him making grievous outcries, or giving other ſuch ſigns as he did himſelf, when he was under the ſame pain? Nay, though he was never in the ſame condition, yet he underſtands him to be affected with ſome great evil. It is true, ordinarily we do not apprehend one anothers evil ſo clearly as our own; but the reaſon is, becauſe the one is a matter of Senſe, the other of Memory, or Imagination; the

the one is uſually a preſent Object, the other an abſent: and even our own abſent evil we apprehend not ſo well as our preſent. Finally, all the pity and compaſſion and friendſhip we ſee in the world, confutes both theſe pretences; eſpecially where our love to any perſon is great, which makes us to unite it to our ſelves (the firſt and eſſential property of love.) And conſider it but as a part of our ſelves, and ſometimes much the better (as it is in Wives and Children, and very

very dear friends) and conſequently to be the moſt truly and inwardly affected with the evil or good they ſuffer or enjoy. And thoſe happy Souls who have had clear and true apprehenſions of the moſt perfect and amiable Nature of God, have experienced, I doubt not, that they have infinitely preferred the felicity of the Divine Nature before their own, his Will before theirs; and have thought and eſteemed themſelves not worthy of the leaſt regard in compare with him;

and which is ſtill moſt of all, could have been content to ſacrifice all Being and Happineſs to his pleaſure, if it were abſolutely neceſſary. And we ſee the ſame frequently amongſt Men one toward another, when a common Souldier, under an apprehenſion of the greater worth and bravery of his Commander, expoſeth his own life to certain danger, and deſtruction too, to ſave the others. In the next place, that there is an innate appetite in all men after this perfection of beneficence

neficence and doing good, without any ſelf-reſpect, I appeal to Univerſal Expe-rience. Nor is there any man, who after he hath performed any ſuch act, is not pleaſed therewith, and ready to brag of it. It is true, the gratification of this Natural Appetite, or the poſſeſſion of ſuch a good, cannot but be delightful: but even this delight ſpring-ing therefrom, may not be any thing of the End or Object foreſeen or propo-ſed, but only conſequent upon the action; as it is

 true.

true it alſo may be. The pleaſure of doing good, may be one diſtinct part of the End and Effect of ones beneficence, as well as the good done to others, when one takes a view of ſome particular good things which conſtitute the whole End and Object.

Laſtly, That this delight and pleaſure, from this perfection of our Volition, or from Univerſal Benevolence, and in part conſequent Beneficence, may be greater than from any other Object; and that there is

a Capacity in our Souls to be more delighted therewith, than any other particular good, methinks is hence moſt evidently proved, *viz.* Becauſe it is certainly the greateſt good we can poſſibly poſſeſs, (greater than our own happineſs, as much as the whole Univerſe is greater than ourſelves) and becauſe we are capable of ſeeing it to be ſo. Now certainly the Senſe and Perception of our actual poſſeſſion of the greateſt good we are capable of; and that there neither is,

nor can be any greater, muſt needs fill the Soul with the moſt complete intenſe ſatiſfying delight. It cannot be the Nature of the Soul to be pleaſed as much with thep oſſeſſion of any other good, as with that which only ſhe ſees clearly to be abſolutely the greateſt ſhe or any other Being can obtain. It is plain therefore, that our duty and our intereſt, our perfection and our happineſs are inſeparable, ſo long as God continues and preſerves our nature ſuch as he hath made it:

it: nor can we eaſily conceive it, if at all, to be other than it is.

14. After this, I ſcarcely need mention ſo plain a conſequence, as that if Volition hath any leſs good for its Object than abſolutely the greateſt, it is a defect therein, of which there are indefinite degrees, till we come to the loweſt, which is mentioned before.

15. And it is this ἕξις, or relation of *Volition & actual and habitual inclination* to their Object, which is called *Moral Good & Evil, Holineſs*

and Sin, *bonum honeſtum & inhoneſtum*, *Virtue and Vice*, and by an hundred other Names, *viz.* When Volition hath for its Object the greateſt good, (actually or habitually known, immediately or mediately) then is that VolitionMorally good, honeſt, or virtuous: but when it hath any other leſſer delectable good for its Object, (and ſome good it muſt have) then it is Morally Evil, or a Sin. Whence it appears, that Sin is a *Defect* only, or a *Negation*: for the Defect of this ἕξις, or relation

relation of Volition to its Object (which is always delectable good) is only this, that it hath not for its Object the greateſt good.

16. I have before juſt hinted, That this Moral Good is alſo a kind of *bonum utile*, or profitable good; that is to ſay, it is a means of, or hath in it ſome degree of Cauſality of delectable good. For Volition of any good, hath at leaſt a tendency to effect it, which is ſome degree of Cauſality; and in us it hath no more: like as the *Niſus* in Bodies to

Motion is ſomething, and is a tendency which hath ſome degree of Cauſality of Motion in it; as appears from this, that if you remove the impediment only, Motion preſently follows; and that there is plainly difference between two Bodies, one of which hath, the other hath it not. But in God it always actually effects it; and God by his power doth generally upon occaſion of our Volition, make actually exiſtent delectable good, or thoſe things which cauſe it: and

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in this conſiſts all the goodneſs of Moral Good, or all its Eligibility, or that which makes it the Object of any Volition, or its perfection; for by *perfection* I mean *bonum utile*, or profitable good, that which doth *perficere* or effect delectable good. On the contrary, the evil of Sin, or that for which it is not eligible, and refuſable, is the privation of a tendency to, or Cauſality of Delectable Good. Virtue therefore is a tendency to an infinite good, Sin a privation of it.

17. Sin

17. Sin then is no ſmall or light thing, being in one reſpect plainly an infinite evil. For whereas our Volition may and ought to have for its Object an infinite Delectable Good, in reſpect of Extenſion, Intention, and Duration, the greateſt Eternal Felicity of the Univerſe, and conſequently tends to it, and hath ſome Cauſality thereof in it:

When this our Volition is ſinful, or hath any leſſer good for its Object, there is a deprivation of all this.

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In this ſence that of the Schoolmen is true, *That Sin is a Converſion of the Will from an Infinite Good to a Finite one.*

18. But this is not all: though the Evil or Miſchief of Sin immediately be *privative*, yet often by neceſſary conſequence it is *poſitive* alſo; as when one wills any Delectable Good to himſelf, which cannot be effected without the poſitive inconvenience, grief, hurt, miſery of another. For example, if any one ſhould be of ſuch a temper,

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as to be delighted with anothers pain or ſuffering, and conſequently will and deſire it in order to that end, which is called pure Malice: Or if unlimited power to do what he liſteth, and conſequently to do Miſchief (called Tyranny) pleaſe him; or if being pleaſed with Superiority and Eminency in any thing, (as in Power, Riches, Knowledge, Happineſs,) in order to this his Superiority; he takes away from any perſon what he hath of all theſe; and theſe appetites may be

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ſo boundleſs, that they cannot be ſatisfyed but by an infinite miſchief. As if any Being, that he might be infinitely ſuperiour to all in happineſs, or in the poſſeſſion of any good, ſhould not only take from all, all they poſſeſſed, but make all beſides himſelf the moſt extreamly miſerable. And there have been ſuch Monſters among Men (ſome of the *Roman* Emperors, and others) who have advanced very far in this prodigious wickedneſs. Hiſtorians report *Tiberius* to have been

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ſo delighted with Cruelty, that he was termed *Lutum ſanguine maceratum, a lump of Clay ſoaked in Blood*; after which he more thirſted, than ſtrong drinks, notwithſtanding that he loved them ſo well, as to have the Name of *Biberius Caldius Mero*, inſtead of *Tiberius Claudius Nero*. They tell us alſo, that *Caligula* made it the diverſion of his Meals, to ſee men racked and Beheaded; and that *Nero* ſet the City of *Rome* on fire, that he might have the glory of Re-building it,

and

and having it called after his own Name, *Neropolis*. Dangerous certainly it is, to begin to lay aſide a certain tenderneſs of others good, and to be careleſs what miſchief we do to any body, ſo we may gratifie our own Appetites. Though our power may be ſhort and inſufficient, yet our Minds may be ſoon debauched to ſuch a degree, as firſt to be content to moleſt or incommode our Neighbour, then to ruine him, then to undo and deſtroy whole Families, Cities, and Nations,

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for the ſake of ſome ſmall paltry pleaſure of our own; and at laſt to delight in it.

19. A ſecond perfection of Volition we have ſaid to be, in reſpect of the Action, which is two fold. The firſt is Intenſion, Force, and Strength; of which it is certain there may be various degrees in the Actions of Spirits. The greateſt good, *viz.* That of the whole Univerſe, ought to have the greateſt ſtrength of Volition that can be, which is no leſs than Infinite.

nite. And here is a neceſſary defect in all Finite Rational Beings whatſoever; only God, who is Infinite in Power, Force, Action, hath this; to his Nature alone it belongs; all other Beings fall infinitely ſhort of him; and therefore may be ſaid too to be faulty in compare with him. In the other perfection of our Volition, *viz.* the having its due Object an Infinite Good, God hath made us capable of being perfectly like himſelf: but here the moſt perfect of his Creatures are

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at an infinite diſtance from him. The greateſt degree of this perfection, is to will the Univerſal good, or rather the greateſt good, with all the vehemency, zeal, and force, our Minds are capable of; and contrariwiſe, a great degree of the oppoſite defect, is to will the Univerſal good the moſt remiſly: but a greater degree, not to will it at all; and the greateſt of all, it ſeems both in reſpect of the Action and Object together, to will the leaſt good with the greateſt force and vehemency.

mency. Of this intenſion and firmneſs of our Volition, and likewiſe our actual and habitual inclination to the Univerſal good, the paſſions of deſire after, love to, and delight in ſo doing and being, are the cauſes and the effects too; and therefore ſigns, according to their reſpective degrees: and the being thus affected towards Piety, Charity, Humility, Spirituality, and all other inſtances thereof, is that which is ſignified by the phraſes of *Virtues being natural to us, it being the Temper*

per, Complexion, Conſtitution of our Minds; its being a living and vital principle, producing fruits and effects of outward good actions. In the Scripture it is *the Spirit, living according to the Spirit, and being led by the Spirit, and delighting in the Law of God according to the inward man, and the new man created after God*; becauſe the Object that pleaſeth is a Spiritual thing, and becauſe it is according to the Word of God dictated by the Spirit of God, and from the influence or efficiency of Gods

Gods Spirit in us. Here may be noted, that the degree of the ſtrength of our Volition and inclination to the Univerſal good, and in order to that of our paſſions, ought at leaſt to exceed that which is to any other particular good, or elſe it will be ineffectual. Whence it may be further uſefully obſerved, That they are not always to be deemed or termed good men, who in Pulpit, Church, or private Converſation, not only appear, but really are very zealous and affectionate

nate in Religion; becauſe they generally are of paſſionate Tempers in other matters, and may perhaps have greater affections, and conſequently inclinations to other Objects. A man of a more calm and ſedate temper in Religion, provided that the greateſt degree of affection he hath be directed to his duty, may be a good man; when one of a more boiſterous and paſſionate one, whatever he is vulgarly taken for, may be indeed a bad man. The one ſhall more ſteadily and con-

conſtantly do his duty than the other. In like manner, when a man ſins deliberately, it is a ſign of a greater bent, ſtrength, and intenſion of the inclination of the Will to its undue Object, and of a leſs to Virtue; when he ſins by ſurprize, or on a ſudden, it is not ſo much a ſign thereof. But theſe and many other things uſually treated of in Morality, may with a little conſideration be eaſily and diſtinctly determined from the foregoing Concluſions, and a wary obſervation and

experience of the operations of our Minds.

20. The ſecond Perfection of our Volition and inclination, in reſpect of the *Action*, is Conſtancy, Continuance, or Duration. So that in this reſpect, the higheſt degree is to have the Volition and Inclination *perpetually* and *eternally* directed to the abſolutely greateſt good; the loweſt, to have them ſo directed but for one moment, or the leaſt of time. This perfection of the *Action of Volition*, belongs only to God, who always

always actually ſo wills: (for he is always the ſame without any change) but of *habitual inclination*, may be in us and other rational Creatures. So that there are only theſe three general perfections of Virtue. The firſt, the direction of Volition and Inclination to their right Object; the ſecond, that they be with the greateſt force or ſtrength any Nature is capable of; the third, that they be the moſt perpetual and conſtant, or continued and laſting; or in three words,

Sincerity, Generoſity, Conſtancy.

21. And yet there ſeems to be another perfection of Volition in reſpect of the Action; and that is, the juſt moderation of it to the various parts of this Univerſal good: *i. e.* When we will any part thereof knowingly, to will it more or leſs in due proportion to the ſhare of goodneſs that is in it, compared with another part; and the defect contrariwiſe will be, to will a leſs good more than a greater; and the greateſt defect

fect is, when we will the leaſt part more than all the reſt; for example, a moment of the leaſt pleaſure to our ſelves, before the Eternal Felicity of God and all the world beſides. And this may be, not only when any two parts are inconſiſtent one with another, as when I will to gratifie my ſelf in that which diſpleaſeth God, and is miſchievous or hurtful to my Neighbour; but alſo when they are conſiſtent, nay, conjoyned together, and they are altogether the Object of

my Will. Thus if a man builds an Hoſpital, or gives any Alms to the Poor, he knows this action will pleaſe God, benefit others, procure himſelf Reputation; and he doth it for all theſe reaſons; he wills all this good together as one: but here that of theſe which he may moſt will, that which he chiefly intends, is his Reputation, and his own pleaſure therefrom, which ought to be poſſibly without compare the leaſt regarded, though ſomewhat. But in truth, this is but a

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ſign of that perfection and *defect* of Volition, which is in reſpect of the Object or of the Action. For if a man wills only his own good, or only to pleaſe God, excluſively one to the other, the defect ſeems to be in not having the Univerſal good, but ſome particular good for the Object of his Volition, becauſe both and more ſhould be taken together: But if a man wills one good compoſed of more parts, and wills that part moſt which in truth is the leaſt good, ei-

ther he doth it knowingly, or ignorantly: if knowingly, (which is moſt frequent, whatever pretences men may make) then the defect is in not willing the greateſt good; and conſequently, it is a defect in reſpect of the Object before-mentioned; for he cannot but know, that it tends to a leſſer Good, to will a leſſer more than a greater. If ignorantly and erroneouſly, judging that the greater Good, which is indeed the leſſer, the ignorance is either through ſome *preſent* defect in

in the actual Volition, or habitual inclination to the Universal good, ones *Duty*, *Right*, *Honeſt*; or it is not: if it be, it is plain where and what the defect is, *viz.* in the Action or Inclination before-mentioned; if it be not, then there is no defect in the preſent Volition at all, (whatever may have been in former Actions of the Will, by which ſuch ignorance may be contracted) but only in the Underſtanding; the Volition may have for all that its due Object, *viz.* the greateſt good.

22. From theſe propoſitions it follows, that the nature of this defect of Volition or of *Sin*, depends not upon any Law, or upon any Beings Will whatſoever, (though its exiſtence doth, becauſe it being only a σχέσις, or relation, it cannot exiſt actually, unleſs the ſubject thereof do, namely ſome *Will* or other:) but though we ſuppoſe no other Being in the World beſides one, and no antecedent Will, yet theſe which have been before-mentioned, would be perfections and defects when-

whenſoever it exiſts. It is true, that Laws may be the ſigns of what is juſt and unjuſt, right and wrong; but not the efficient cauſes, any otherwiſe than a Subject is the efficient cauſe of the exiſtence of its property, as is but now ſaid. Theſe Laws alſo are ſometimes neceſſary & inſeparable ſigns, ſometimes in ſeveral degrees contingent and probable only, according to the knowledge and juſtice of the Law-maker. Thoſe which are certainly Laws of God, who is infallibly wiſe,

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and immutably juſt, are moſt inſeparable and certain ſigns of what is juſt and right: but thoſe which are any other Creatures, are more or leſs probable ones. Laws do not make, but ſuppoſe the thing juſt which they command. It is true alſo what the Apoſtle St. *Paul* ſaith, *That where there is no Law, there is no tranſgreſſion*; becauſe God himſelf and his Volition of what is right and juſt are eternal: or the Apoſtle may mean by *Law*, not ſtrictly an act of ſome *Will* con-

concerning anothers *Action and Will*, but an obligation to *will* or do any thing; a τὸ δέον, a τὸ προσῆκον. Such there always is, whenever any will exiſt, being a relation betwen the *Will* and its due Object the Univerſal good. Beſides, St. *Paul* may mean comparatively; the Tranſgreſſion or Sin is much leſs, where there is no expreſs known Law.

23. Nor doth the nature of Sin or Virtue depend upon *liberum arbitrium*, or *Free-will*; for whether any *Will* hath power to determine

mine its own Volition to the greateſt, or any leſſer good or no; (which I do not deny) yet moſt certainly, whenever there is a direction thereof to a leſſer good, there is a defect in that Volition, come it from what cauſe it will; though it ſhould be the effect of ſome other Being without it, which by his power was able ſo to determine it; or ſuppoſe any Nature ſhould be eternally and neceſſarily ſo conſtituted.

24. It follows likewiſe, that ſuppoſing it poſſible for any

any Being to have for the Object of his Volition the *rectitude* the *perfection* thereof, and ſhould not place it in the *willing the greateſt good*, but in willing ſome particular, or (which is moſt common) ſome perſonal good, as ſelf-preſervation; this very Volition would have that defect in it we call Sin, and would not be capable of any reward, *i. e.* any thing which ſhould maintain or encourage ſuch an action. If it were poſſible for a man unfeignedly in his Conſcience to judge it

it his bounden duty to desire and pursue always as his ultimate end, his own greatest personal good, without regard to God or others, and accordingly should Will and Act; this would be a vitious man. And whether God may not by way of punishment for pride, *&c.* permit a man so to err, is not here to be determined: and there have been two pernicious and foolish mistakes, if not wilful Errors, that men might securely indulge their lusts, of some late new Modellers

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of Morality; to which a great part of the ill-nature and debauchery of the Age is to be imputed: the one, the advancing of their perſonal good, to the place and dignity of the laſt end of all their actions; the other, the pitching upon no better than the preſervation of life and limb, or (to enlarge their own Sence) the greateſt meaſures of the Conveniencies, Comforts, and Pleaſures proper to this bodily life. In theſe Opinions they have quite perverted the nature of things, and

and made Vice to be Virtue. Or becauſe, according to the ſame mens Doctrine, every one is neceſſarily carried to his own greateſt good or happineſs in general, only through ignorance is oft out of the way, they have made no Vice at all, ſubſtituting in its room Folly and Imprudence.

25. What hath been ſaid of *Volition*, may be ſaid of *Actual and Habitual Inclination*; and becauſe Volition and Actual Inclination are but ſometimes exiſtent in men, but Habitual In-

Inclinations conſtant and perpetual; 'tis according to this a man is chiefly to be eſtimated, *viz.* by three things. (1.) Its direction to its right Object, the Univerſal Good. (2.) The force and ſtrength thereof. (3.) Its conſtancy or frequency in the Soul: each of which hath degrees; ſo that it is eaſie to ſet down certain rules for the judgment of the goodneſs or badneſs of any man. For example ſake only: He is the worſt man in the firſt reſpect, who is habitually inclined to, and

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in love with the meaneſt or leaſt delectable good; in the ſecond reſpect, who is the moſt vehemently inclined thereto; in the third reſpect, who is perpetually or conſtantly ſo. Contrariwiſe, he is the beſt, who hath the greateſt good abſolutely, or the *Eternal Felicity* (for by Felicity I mean the greateſt degree of delight or pleaſure as to intenſion) *of the Univerſe*, or all Beings exiſtent for the Object of his Habitual Inclination; or who is habitually inclined thereto, and that with the greateſt

greateſt force and ſtrength of his nature, and then conſtantly and perpetually. It is eaſie to ſee, what an indefinite number of degrees there are between theſe two extremes, in all the three reſpects. The greateſt difficulty is not to know theſe Rules of our Judgment; but to know our ſelves, and conſequently to apply them. And ſince *Denominatio ſit à Majore*, he only is to be called a *good man*, who hath a ſtronger and more conſtant Habitual Inclination to the Univerſal good, than to any one

one or more particulars: And this was, or might have been, the reaſon why Martyrdome was ſo highly eſteemed and magnified in the Primitiue Church. A Martyr by his ſuffering for his Faith, even though he was not actually Baptized, was thought to expiate all former bad life, and to be undoubtedly ſaved, or to obtain a moſt glorious and bliſsful condition in Heaven: becauſe ſuch his ſuffering death, or parting with life itſelf, deemed the greateſt *perſonal good* amongſt men,

men, rather than to deny that Truth which they ſuppoſed God had commanded to believe and profeſs, and conſequently to diſobey God, was a certain ſign and argument of a ſtronger actual and habitual inclination at that time of his death to obey God, and conſequently to that which was *right*, *juſt*, and *good*, than to any other thing in the world beſides. Nor may it be here amiſs, to hint how eaſie it is to underſtand it poſſible for this Habitual Inclination, Bent, and Propenſion

penſion to any certain Object, to be ſo forcible and ſtrong, as to be inconſiſtent with an act of Free Will or choice about that Object: nor may a man be able to divert, ſuſpend, or withhold his actual Volition, conſent, or embrace from it, when it is propoſed. Though by prudent contrivance, theſe Habitual Inclinations generally, (I do not ſay all) may alſo by degrees be weakned, and at laſt quite extinguiſhed and deſtroyed.

26. 'Tis as eaſie hence to

to deduce all particular virtues and vices, of which we ſhall find many to have as yet no Names. For one way, and the moſt common, is by diſtinguiſhing particular delectable Good or Pleaſure (whether that particular Good be in a mans ſelf, or in another as the Subject; whether it be mine or anothers; but it is uſually, if not always, a mans own) from its various Cauſes or Objects. And it ſeems there may be ſix general ones (I do but now ſuggeſt, not determine.)

(1) The poſſeſſion of any Good in general ſo eſteemed; many things thus onely pleaſe. (2) The pain, miſchief, evil ſuffering of another: Whether any Being is of ſuch a temper as to be delighted therewith, let others conſider; but I ſee no reaſon why it is not poſſible. Now to will ones delight or pleaſure from this Object or Cauſe, is called *Malice*; to be habitually inclined thereto, *Maliciouſneſs*: but the renouncing of this, or the nolition of it, or the volition of its abſence, and

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inſtead thereof the volition of the univerſal Good, may be called *Charity*, or if there be any fitter Name. (3) The third Object cauſing delight to us, is power to do what one pleaſeth, to make any thing conſequent upon ones will; of which three degrees; Liberty, Equality, Superiority. Now to have pleaſure ariſing from hence, the onely Object of our volition, is an action of *pride*; the onely Object of our habitual inclination, the vice thereof: To refuſe it, as before, or will its abſence,

is *Humility*. (4) Mere Activity and Life, and that exerted in all the operations of our Souls; ſuch as is, for example, mere Contemplation and Knowledge, Senſe, Imagination, ſtrong Paſſions, intenſe Volitions or Reſolutions. And becauſe Knowledge may be indefinitely divided according to its Objects, here alone may be almoſt an infinite number of particular Vices and Virtues. This Vice and contrary Virtue have no names, ſome kinds of it may. (5) Some certain

tain agreeable corporeal Motions, or Motions of our Bodies, to which our Souls are united, *ſuaves Corporis Commotiones*, as ſome have called them, which I know no common name to ſignifie them by, unleſs *Titillation* may be allowed. Theſe (as *Cartes* thinks) create pleaſure to the mind, as a natural ſign of the health or good conſtitution of the Body: and the pleaſures ariſing in the Soul from them, *Plato* calls ἡδονὰς διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τεινούσας, Pleaſures which are con-

veyed to the Soul by the Body. Of this ſort are all Senſations; amongſt which are thoſe of Health, Calmneſs, and Serenity; other bodily tempers; many corporeal paſſions, ſuch as Love, Joy, Hope, Acquieſcence, *&c.* Nay, I may ſay all perhaps; for it may be that ſome Souls may be delighted with the corporeal paſſions of Sadneſs and Grief; though in theſe not onely the Mechanical or Corporeal Vibrations and motions of Fibres, Nerves, and Spirits, delight and pleaſe; but

but alſo the Senſe, Perception, Life, and ſome kind of action of the Soul. So that this pleaſure is mixed from two very different Objects; one Corporeal, t'other Intellectual: and indeed, moſt of our pleaſure or delight ariſeth from ſeveral Objects mixed and blended together. Now to have the pleaſure or delight ariſing from ſuch motions of our Bodies, the entire Object of our Volition, is an act of *Senſuality*; and to be habitually enclined thereto, the Vice: But to refuſe this

Self-pleaſure, or to will its abſence, is *Sobriety* or *Temperance*, ἐγκράτεια. (6) The perfection of a mans nature, of all his Faculties, (which may be referred to the firſt) and amongſt the reſt, the *Rectitude*, *Honeſty*, *Probity* of his Actions and Inclinations, or his Virtue, may be and is the cauſe of great pleaſure and delight to him. Now even to have this delight; (uſually called the ſatisfaction of a good Conſcience) nay let me adde, that pleaſure which ariſeth from hopes and aſ-

ſurance

ſurance of a reward, and from the poſſeſſion of it too: I ſay, to have this the entire Object of our Volition, Intention, Inclination, or in greater proportion to other parts of the Univerſal Good than it ought, is a ſin and vice which wants a name, as doth its oppoſite Virtue. Finally, (not to inſiſt upon this diſtribution I have made, which I brought onely for example of ſome general Heads) as many as there are Objects which may pleaſe or delight us, and conſequently

correſpondent Appetites, (which are numberleſs:) So many ſorts of ſins or vices may there be; they all may be reduced to ſome general heads, and thoſe heads divided, and theſe again ſubdivided, *&c.*

27. Many other diſtributions of Virtue and Vice may be made; as from the parts of the Univerſal Good diſtinguiſhed by its Subjects, uſually comprehended under three, *viz. God*, All created or finite Beings beſides our ſelves, under the name of our *Neighbour*, (though

(though we know little of any other, or what we can do to or for them beſides Mankind) and laſtly *our ſelves.* The Volition of the Univerſal Good, our laſt end, therefore may be reſolved into three parts, *viz.* The love of God; The love of our Neighbour; The love of our ſelves: Or, Piety, Charity, and prudent and ſober care of our own greateſt concerns. And by Love, I mean not Gratitude, but a Volition of the good of the Object beloved, whether the good

be

be an abſent or preſent good. To will an abſent good, and deſire it for the perſon we love, can onely take place with reſpect to our Neighbour and our ſelves, not to God, who we know cannot want any thing: But to will a preſent good, may be to God alſo. We may will, approve, rejoyce, delight in the infinite perfection and happineſs of his nature, which he always doth and cannot but poſſeſs.

28. But theſe three parts of the Univerſal Good are al-

always to be intended *together* actually or habitually, although but one of them may be firſt regarded. As when we *actually* will any good to our Neighbour, we ought at leaſt *habitually* to will it, not onely becauſe thereby we do good to him, but alſo becauſe it pleaſeth God, and it is our own perfection, and will be for our own greater good ſo to do; although that we firſt looked at was our Neighbours good. And theſe three parts are ſo neceſſarily and inſepa-

inſeparably conjoyned, that we may and ought always *habitually* to believe, when we endeavour to effect the one, the other will neceſſarily follow. Thus, for example, to love God, the Volition of good to him, or the rejoycing in the perfection and happineſs of his Nature, hath neceſſarily conſequent others and our own Good: Becauſe all the happineſs of Creatures depends thereon, and flows therefrom, (from his *Being*, and from his moſt perfect Nature;) and becauſe it

it is and will be our greateſt Perfection, Comfort, Reward. So again, if we ſincerely love and do good to our Neighbour, we may be ſure it pleaſeth God, and is beſt for our ſelves. And ſo Laſtly, our own greateſt good truly as to Intenſion, Extenſion, and Duration; or our greateſt perfection and happineſs, is in and by loving of God, and doing all the good we can to our Neighbour.

29. It may be further obſerved, that all actions and correſpondent habits of

of the *Will* whatſoever, which do effect the Univerſal good, have been uſed to be called Virtues, without any conſideration of the *end* of the Action, or the *ultimate Object* thereof; and for diſtinction-ſake may be called *inſtrumental* or *eventual* vertues: The other ſort of Volitions which have their due end, or due ultimate Object conſidered as ſuch, having the name of *principal* or *inherent* Virtues. So, for example, to apply the mind to attention and conſideration, purſuit after

after or love of the Truth, [φιλαλήθεια] are accounted Virtues, becauſe they uſually are the cauſes of good effects in the world more than hurtful ones. Such again are to judge rightly and truly, eſpecially concerning other men; *i. e.* always onely according to what really appears to us from things themſelves, not becauſe we imagine ſo: Although the end of theſe actions may be no other than the pleaſure and delight a man takes in ſuch conduct of himſelf in ſuch temper

temper and actions, or ſome perſonal and proper good, and therefore indeed are inherently vitious, according to our ſenſe of Virtue and Vice. So likewiſe *Liberality*, or the diſtribution of many good things to others, conſidered without its end; I mean, the inward Volition of ſo doing, or the action of the Will, of which the outward bodily action is a Signe and Effect onely, and belongs not to this preſent diſcourſe.

30. And

30. And 'tis here only, that it is generally true, that *Virtus conſiſtit in medio*, *i. e.* there may be too much or too little of ſuch actions and habits, both which extremes do not effect the Univerſal good, but are of more ill than good conſequence. Thus, for example, A man may attend too much ſometimes and to ſome things, or too little; he may give too much or too little, the firſt of which is called *prodigality*, the ſecond *parſimony* or covetouſneſs. But it is falſe and abſurd

abſurd to ſay this of *Virtue* as it is before defined; for there can be no exceſs therein. Nay, ſome of theſe very actions may have no exceſs; as Juſtice rightly defined, and Faith.

31. Thoſe of this ſort of actions and habits are called Virtues, which are obſerved and believed to have more good effects than evil ones in the total ſum. Inſomuch that if they have very few more good than bad conſequences, they are termed mean Virtues, as *Frugality*; if very many

and

and great ones, then they are called great Virtues, ſuch as *Juſtice*, or giving to every one his due, *i. e.* that to each particular,(and conſequently to ones ſelf alſo) as to quality,quantity, time, and all other reſpects of giving it, which is moſt for the Univerſal good; *Meekneſs* [πραότης,] or ſlowneſs to be moved to anger, or returning evil when provoked by infirmities, ill actions, or injuries to our ſelves or others; *Clemency*, or an omiſſion of part of puniſhment; *Forbearance* and long ſuffe-

ſufferance, [μακροθυμία] a delay of puniſhment, or of returning evil for a long time after many injuries; *Forgiveneſs*, or an omiſſion to puniſh, or return any evil for injuries at all; *Bounty*, *Courage*, *Veracity*, *conſent to the Conſtitution and Adminiſtration of Government*, or entring into a Society, where ſome may be on purpoſe ſet apart and appointed for finding out and improving and ſecuring what is for the common benefit of that Society, and particularly for the arbitration

tion of all differences, which the *Jews* call דיינים *Judges or Government:* and make it one of the ſeven Precepts of the Sons of *Noah*, or of thoſe whoſe advantages of benefit to Mankind were ſo eaſily and well known, that all men who had the uſe of Reaſon and Natural light only, allowed and commanded them. But there is no greater inſtrumental or eventual Virtue than *Chriſtian Faith*, or to be a Believer; by which I mean, Obedience to *Jeſus* in Gods Name, which conſiſts

ſiſts of, or contains two things. (1.) An aſſent to all things *Jeſus*, or thoſe commiſſionated and inſpired by him, taught and delivered, as infallibly true. And (2.) A practiſing all he hath commanded. Better words than theſe we have not to expreſs theſe two particulars by, though both indeed are doing and practiſing commands. For the precepts of Chriſtian Faith contain the moſt ſincere, and generous, and conſtant inherent Virtue; as alſo the greateſt inſtrumental

tal or eventual ones. The very firſt part alone, or *Aſſent*, is generally in various degrees a great inſtrumental Virtue. Some habits again there are, whoſe advantage of good or bad effects is ſo uncertain, that it is diſputed whether they be Virtues or not. Some at ſome times ſay they are, and others ſay not. For example, *Facetiouſneſs* and *Taciturnity*. And for the ſame reaſon, it is hardly yet determined, or determinable, whether ſome diſpoſitions and actions be Vices, or Vitious

or no; *viz.* becauſe the advantage or exceſs of good or bad conſequences of either ſide is yet unknown. Such perhaps may be *Scrupuloſity*, or an aptitude to examine the lawfulneſs of every the ſmalleſt action; not in reſpect of the end only, (for that is eaſily known) but of the effect, which is moſtly difficult, often impoſſible to know. So alſo Separation from ſome particular corrupted Church. Some may think Separation, ſome Communion the greateſt miſchief. Such indivi-

dual

dual actions alſo may be called *indifferent*. Theſe for their very being ſuch, are not by any man to be done at all; and a man is always to do that which is not *indifferent*, or to act becauſe he judgeth upon ſo much conſideration as is fit to be allowed or ſufficient for things of no more importance, that of his action there may be more good than bad conſequences, and more good conſequences than of his omiſſion of it, or doing any other action at that time. Thoſe acti-

ons alſo are by ſome termed *indifferent*, which though they are at one time in ſome circumſtances of beſt effect, and therefore to be done; yet in others 'tis confeſſed they are not. If ſo, there may be a great many degrees of Indifferency. Some actions may be more, ſome leſs *indifferent* than others, in reſpect of frequency and number of conveniencies or good effects. Some may be for the moſt part of many and great good conſequences and effects, but ſeldom of any hurtful

hurtful ones, and thoſe but ſmall and few. On the contrary ,, ſome may more *generally* be very inconvenient and noxious, yet ſometimes convenient and uſeful. Some laſtly may be near equal. All which hindereth not, but that every one of theſe individual actions, according as with all their circumſtances they are judged to be of moſt good or bad conſequences, are as much to be done or not to be done *at that particular time*, as if they were of that ſort of actions which were per-

petually to be done or abſtained from. And theſe are the things generally about which the World with an unproportionate confidence diſſent and quarrel, and contend unto wounds and death itſelf.

32. Many other are the uſeful inferences which may be made from theſe few Obſervations, and many the Queſtions determined thereby. As only for inſtance ſake: It is an ordinary Queſtion among the Writers of Ethicks, and it may be of ſome importance,

tance, whether *Virtutes ſunt connexæ*, *all Virtues are connected?* ſo that if there be one in any Subject, there are all. To which it is eaſily anſwered, that they are not. For it is plain, that a man may have a more ſtrong and prevailing habitual inclination to his *duty*, to that which is *juſt and right*, to pleaſe and obey God, to the Univerſal good, than to ſome one or more certain Objects, but not than to ſome other. So ſome men eſpecially, if advanced in years, may prefer

their duty and acting according to Conſcience, before any ſenſual pleaſures; but not before Riches, Reputation, Dignity, Power, Self-will, &c. They may have ſo little inclination to the former, as eaſily to ſubject it to their Conſcience; but ſo violent and impetuous to the latter, that they are not to be governed or commanded by their Conſcience, or a judgement of, and habitual inclination to their duty. They may be, as is uſually ſaid, perhaps, Covetous, Vain-glorious, Am-

Ambitious, Proud, and Obſtinate;but not Voluptuous: and on the contrary, (to ſpeak in the received ſtyle) ſome may be very inſenſible of Glory or Greatneſs, but furiouſly carried to the pleaſures of Senſe. And hence it appears, that the Characters which Hiſtorians have given of ſome men, may be true, namely, that there was in them *Magnæ Virtutes*, *nec minora Vitia*; great Virtues, and as great Vices. But it is as plain, that it is an ordinary miſtake of ſome perſons, who ſay,

that every man hath the ſeeds and roots of all particular Vices in his nature; if by thoſe words they mean, an *inordinate and immoderate habitual inclination or appetite*. And I know not what they can mean elſe, unleſs it be a bare capacity; but then there would be the ſeeds of all Virtues as well as Vices. For there may be ſo many ſins as there are Appetites, and ſo many Appetites as there are Objects: and there are ſome objects from which the Souls of ſome men have a na-

natural averſion; and this is to be underſtood, not only of individual objects, but alſo of ſome kinds of them, and conſequently of ſome kinds of ſins.

33. But it is a Queſtion of much greater conſequence, what Virtues and Vices are the greateſt, and who are the moſt Virtuous or Vicious perſons? For according to our right information and judgement herein, our Opinions and Actions, our Inclinations and Behaviour, our Rewards and Puniſhments towards men

men, ought principally to be directed and governed. Now Vices or Sins (to take only that part) are to be eſtimated either according to their *principle* and *end*, or according to their *effect* and *conſequence*: or they are either *inherent* or *eventual*, as hath been before ſaid. In reſpect of the principle or end, there is no one kind or ſort of ſin univerſally greater than another; for there may be as great an exceſs of φιλαυτία, or ſelf-love, in one ſort as in another; and that is the greateſt ſin in this

this reſpect, in which there is a greater exceſs of φιλαυτία, or habitual inclination to ones proper and perſonal good, above Univerſal Charity, or above the habitual inclination to the Univerſal good. Thus there may be as great exceſs of φιλαυτία in *ſenſuality*, as in *pride* or *malice*. I ſay it may be ſo, though more generally it is reaſonably believed and ſuppoſed that there is more in theſe two laſt; and that becauſe there are uſually more and greater miſchievous effects to others viſible and

and known to him that is guilty of them, than in the firſt: whence one muſt needs have a leſs regard to the good of others compared with his own, than the other. But in reſpect of the effect or conſequence, there is always a great difference between the kinds of ſins, and one is much worſe than another. Thus *Malice* and *Ambition* are much greater ſins than *Vainglory* or *Senſuality*, eſpecially ſome kinds of it, ſuch as the immoderate love of Bodily Exerciſes, Divertiſements,

ments, and Paſtimes. In particular, or rather individual ſins or ill actions, there may be always difference both in reſpect of the principle and the effect. So a particular ſin of Malice, & Spight, and Revenge, may be much greater and more heinous than a ſin of Intemperance or Fornication, both in reſpect of φιλαυτία, or ſelf-love, in oppoſition to the good of others, and in reſpect of the hurtful and noxious effects and conſequences. Sometimes a particular ſin may be greater

ter in reſpect of the effect than another, but not in reſpect of the principle. Thus one act of Pride or Malice in any man, may have many more miſchievous conſequences upon it than an act of Intemperance or Fornication; but yet there may be leſs of the exceſs of φιλαυτία in that than in this; the man perhaps being ignorant of many of the ill Conſequences thereof, whereas in this he ſaw them and yet committed the ſin. We ought to diſtinguiſh between the greatneſs of a

ſin

ſin and of a *ſinner*. He is not always in Gods account (who knows the inclinations of the Soul certainly) the greateſt ſinner, who commits the greateſt ſin. I mean, he is not always the moſt guilty of an *inherent* ſin, who is the moſt guilty of the greateſt *eventual* ſin: and on the contrary, one man may be *inherently*, or in reſpect of the principle, more ſinful and vicious in the commiſſion of a leſs *eventual* ſin, than another in the commiſſion of a greater. Thus oft-times he may

may be a worſe man, or a greater ſinner *inherently*, who is guilty of Vain-glory, (which ſeems to have ſo few more evil than good conſequences upon it, and therefore to be a leſs *Eventual* ſin than Fornication or Intemperance) than he who is guilty of Fornication or Intemperance.

34. So likewiſe it hath been diſputed, whether actual inclinations and propenſions, or (as ſome call them) appetites to ſin, concupiſcences without conſent of the Will, or actual Vo-

Volition, be ſinful? To which it is to be anſwered, that it is plain they are ſinful. But withal, that the Wills not conſenting, or rather the actual nilling and refuſing them becauſe they are ſinful, is a certain ſign of the Superiority or Prevalency juſt at that time of its habitual inclination to that which is right and honeſt; as the not regarding at all, and not attending whether they be ſinful, and not checking them if they ſeem ſo to be, is a ſign of the contrary. For there may

may be not onely divers, but contrary habitual inclinations in the Soul at the ſame time. But as for mere thoughts or ſuggeſtions of what is ſinful or unlawful, as of Revenge, or Luſt, or Vain-glory, there can be no ſin in them; And when they are aſſentedto, or delighted in, the ſin is not in thoſe thoughts, but in the actual Volition or Inclination of the Will. It is not a ſin, for example, for a man to have ſuch a thought as this: *Miſchief thou ſuch a man becauſe he once miſchieved*

chieved you: Do ſuch a thing, becauſe ſuch perſons will ſpeak well of and applaud you for ſuch a performance: For ſuch a thought is but an Object of my Underſtanding, and propoſed to my Will perhaps; it is not in my Will, in which onely is ſin. If it were a ſin barely to have ſuch a thought, then it would be ſo if I had it conveyed to me by reading or hearing of ſuch words; which no man can think. Nevertheleſs, the emerging or ſpringing of ſuch thoughts from our

our ſelves, is a very probable ſign of habitual ſinful inclinations in us. For it is a ſign (though not a neceſſary one) of ſome corporeal Paſſion of Love, or Delight, or Deſire, conjoyned to ſuch Thoughts and Objects; or of ſome ſuch bodily diſpoſition, and perhaps mental temper, which naturally impreſſeth or cauſeth ſuch inclinations. The ſpontaneous emergency of certain thoughts in us, uſually proceeds from ſuch a diſpoſition of the Body in us, as is the cauſe of

of delight and love to ſuch Objects; and then thoſe paſſions (if not hindered) impreſs on the Will actual and habitual inclinations. What is meant by ſin, and ſinful, hath been before laid down, *viz.* when the Inclination and Volition of the Will hath for its Object only ſome Particular good, and not the Univerſal (or that which God hath commanded by Revelation or Reaſon, that which pleaſeth him, which is all one; becauſe the Commands of God are, and are by all men

men taken to be an inſeparable ſign thereof) actually or habitually; *i. e.* *actually* perceived, or *habitually* and *confuſedly* remembred. For it is of great moment to be obſerved, that when the Underſtanding actually takes notice of and regards, and the Will is carried to ſome particular good only, ſuch as is ones daily food, ſleep, *&c.* yet the Will may by an habitual memory be carried to, or have for its object the Univerſal good, and that which is right, juſt, honeſt: for

for the Underſtanding may have concluded *generally* from Revelation, or Reaſon, or the common uncontradicted practice of the world, that my particular uſe and enjoyment in ſuch meaſure and ſeaſons of ſuch particular good things, is in ſuch circumſtances for the univerſal good; that it enables me to do more good, and conſequently to pleaſe God and better my own condition: and the Will may act upon ſuch an habitual Memory, without any actual perception preceding.

ding. 'Tis much like a mans *habitual* direction of all his ſteps to the end of his journey, though he doth not in every ſtep, nay perhaps in very few, *actually* think thereof. And as it is a certain ſign of this habitual direction, that the man attends and is ſagacious as much as the danger of going out of the way requires; and that if he hath by anothers admonition, or any other means, any ſuſpicion that he is out of the way, he preſently ſtops and inquires, and endeavours to be

be ſatisfied whether he be in the right-way or no: So it is alſo a ſign of the *habitual* inclination of the Will to that which is right, which is for the Univerſal good, (of which the indubitable commands of God are a certain mark) if in any ſuch ordinary and common actions of life he be as wary and circumſpect as the danger and the importance, compared with other matters, and the likelihood of his erring, requires: and when he hath any ſufficient reaſon to ſuſpect he doth or

may err, to ſtop, to abſtain, to conſider. And this is all I have at preſent to return you in Anſwer to your firſt Queſtion.

35. I have (Sir) in theſe Propoſitions made uſe of Scholaſtick terms, or ſuch-like, which I know are not much agreeable to the humour of this Age: but in truth I could not avoid it; oft-times in the moſt received ſtyle either there wanted Words, as far as I know, or they being of confuſed, looſe, and uncertain ſignification, ſometimes ſignifying

ing one thing, and ſometimes another; ſometimes more or leſs (as every one may inform themſelves) they would not ſerve my purpoſe. And I thought it of gréat pleaſure and uſe, not only to conceive theſe things my ſelf the moſt ſimply and diſtinctly, but alſo to be underſtood clearly by others of more cloſe attention and reaſoning; and therefore by your ſelf in the firſt place, whoſe Command I very well remember. If the Senſe and Notions as they are here de-

livered be well comprehended, as I hope they may with a little uſe, it will be eaſie for men of Style, as they have occaſion, to make for them, and put them into a more faſhionable dreſs, and to expreſs them by more tunable talk, for the ſake of thoſe, who either wanting Ability, or ſhunning Pains, or admiring Eloquence, Fancy, and Wit, more than Truth and Diſtinctneſs and Uſefulneſs of Knowledge, are content and beſt pleaſed with a general, confuſed, and figurative apprehenſion

prehenſion, or with a ſmooth, modiſh, and affectionate expreſſion of things. Nor are they indeed to be neglected, being the generality of men, who though they have little Appetite to Naked Senſe, and dry Reaſon, the food of ſtrong and ſound Minds; yet will very well receive, and digeſt it too, for uſe and action, when it is garniſhed and ſweetned in ſuch manner, as uſeth to be moſt acceptable and grateful to them.

FINIS.

These Books following are publiſhed by the ſame Author, G. Bright, *D. D.*

A Treatiſe concerning Judging one another: Being ſeveral Diſcourſes on the occaſion of our Saviour's Precept, Matth. 7. 1. *Judge not, that you be not judged.* in *Octavo.*

A Treatiſe of Prayer, with ſeveral uſeful occaſional Obſervations, and ſome larger Digreſſions concerning the Judaical obſervation of the Lords day, the external Worſhip of God. In *Octavo.*

Tabulæ Mosaicæ Duæ: Quarum Altera Precepta Legis Mosaicæ commodâ Methodo Dispositа; altera oblationum omnium, ex Efficiente, Materiâ, Consumptione, Personis significatu, Tempore, Distributiones varias continet. *All Three sold by* John Wright *at the Crown on* Ludgate-hill.

ERRATA.

PAge 8. line 14. read *think it.*
Page 32. l. 16. r. *kinds.*
Page 38. l. 11. r. *Momentany.*
Page 39. l. 16. r. *Momentany.*
Page 50. l. 16. r. *Beneficence.*
Page 62. l. 9. r. *Biberius.*

The only modern philosopher referred to by name is Descartes. The general attitude is that of Cumberland. The general pleasure & happiness of all beings is the proper end of action. But Hut. 'inherent' 'eventual' (p. 136). No mention of a Law of Nature.